(iv) National Programme on Leather, Handmade paper and Beekeeping; and

(v) Special Projects in thrust areas.

[English]

Lending Patterns of RRBs

517. SHRI SUDHIR GIRI: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) in which respect the lending patterns of the Regional Rural Banks differ from those of the Commercial Banks;

(b) the proposal of the Regional Rural Banks to enable them at par with the Commercial Banks; and

(c) the reasons for discarding these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) were established with a view to developing the rural economy by providing credit and other facilities particularly to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entreprenuers in the rural sector. Consistent with these objectives, the branch net work of RRBs has expanded primarily in the rural areas and the thrust of lending operations of RRBs has been on target group beneficiaries in rural areas within their area of operation.

However, sustained viability of operations is necessary if the RRBs are to meet the objectives for which these have been established. Accordingly, the Government/Reserve Bank of India (RBI) have taken a number of steps to improve viability of operations of RRBs which cover, inter-alia. deregulation of interest rates, widening the range and scope of services like purchase and discounting of drafts/ cheques and issue of guarantees, financing of non target groups, participation in risk bearing and non risk bearing participation certificates and provision of housing loans etc.

In addition to these, RBI have recently stipulated that beginning 1st April, 1997, the advances of RRBs to priority sector borrowers should constitute 40% of their outstanding advances as in the case of Commercial Banks. Further, as a part of revamping of RRBs, the Government have provided recapitalisation support to select RRBs for celansing up of balance sheets. Preparation of Development Action Plans (DAPs) and execution of Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) by the RRBs with various sponsor banks, on an annual basis, have significantly contributed to improve performance of RRBs.

The above steps have been taken to, inter-alia, provide a level playing field to RRBs, especially in the areas of investment and lending opportunities and to enable them to perform their functions in a viable and sustainable manner.

While no specific proposals in regard to lending policy have been discarded relaxations have been made, in a phased manner, on restrictions on lending, branch expansion and investment of surplus resources subject to availability of necessary expertise and resources with RRBs.

Smuggling of Cardamom from Gautemala

518. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it has come to the notice of the Government that low quality cardamom from Gautemala is smuggled into India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to stop such activity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) Intelligence reveals smuggling of Cardamom of third country origin especially from Indo-Nepal border into India. It is, however, not possible to estimate the details of such smuggling. Field formations are, alert to detect and prevent smuggling of cardamom and other spices.

Write off Loans

519. SHRI SATYA PAL JAIN:

SHRI R.L. BHATIA:

SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any representation has been received by the Union Government from the Government of Punjab in regard to writing off the loan received by it from the Union Government to deal with terrorism;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Union Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) to (c) The State Government has submitted a number of requests for additional assistance including repayment of the outstanding Special Term Loans advanced to the State during the period of militancy (from 1984-85 to 1993-94). The matter is being processed for final decision.

[Translation]

Silk Yarn

520. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the total production of silk yarn in Maharashtra during the last two years;

(b) whether the State has a vast potential of producing and exporting silk yarn; and

(c) If so, the steps taken to boost the production and export of silk yarn?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) The total production of silk yarn in Maharashtra during the last two years is as under:-

I. Mulberry Raw Silk (in M. Tonnes)

Year	Quantity
1995-96	14
1996-97	12

II. Tasar Raw Silk (in Tonnes)

Year	Quantity
1995-96	1
1996-97	1

(b) and (c) Silk yarn export from India were negligible in 1995-96, 1996-97. The value of silk yarn exported was only Rs. 0.44 crores and Rs. 0.54 crores against the total export for Rs. 846 crores and Rs. 880 crores respectively. Most of the silk yarn exports are of yarn made from silk wastes and no mill is producing such yarn has been set up in the State of Maharashtra.

[English]

Law Ministers' Conference

521. SHRI NAMDEO DIWATHE:

SHRI SANDIPAN THORAT:

Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Conference of State Law Ministers was recently held in New Delhi;

(b) if so, the details of the agenda discussed and major decisions taken thereat;

(c) the details of time bound action plan finalised for 1997-98; and

(d) the status of various legal reform process initiated in the recent past and suggestions/proposals received from the Government of Maharashtra along with the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A copy of the agenda of the Law Ministers' Conference is attached as statement. The major decision taken in the meeting are:

1. To amend the Code of Criminal Procedure broadly on the lines of recommendations made by the Law Commission in its 154th Report;

2. To amend the Code of Civil Procedure to avoid delay in completing procedural requirements and to promote alternative dispute resolution mechanisms;

3. To launch State-wise drive for one year with effect from 15 August, 1997 for holding Lok Adalats on quarterly basis to help reduce pendency of cases;

4. To restore position with regrard to appointment of Judges as it existed prior to 1993 Supreme Courts's decision in the case of Advocates on Record Association Vs. Union of India;

5. To take up review/repeal of obsolete laws on priority basis;

6. Making available legal information like Central enactments and decided cases on internet for easy accessibility; and

7. To amend Advocates Act, 1961 & Notaries Act, 1952.

(c) A time bound programme for one year commencing from 15 August, 1997 for holding Lok Adalats on quarterly basis in all States/Union Territories to help reduce pendency of cases has been drawn up.

(d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

Agenda of the Law Ministers Conference 1997

1. Amendments to the Cr. P.C.

2. Amendments to the C.P.C.

3. Reduction of arrears in courts; All India Judicial Service; and Appointment of Judges.

4. Alternative Dispute Resolution; NALSA, Lok Adalats; Delimitation of Constituencies; Advocates Act; Notaries Act; and Related Issues.

5. Repeal/Review of obsolete laws; Plain language in legal drafting; etc. Computerisation of legal information.

Lose Suffered by Indian Bank

522. SHRI ANANT KUMAR HEGDE. Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the amount of loss suffered by the Indian Bank during 1995-96 & 1996-97;

(b) whether the Government/RBI have taken or propose to take any steps for improving the performance of the bank; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Indian Bank has reported a net loss of Rs. 1336.40 crores during the year 1995-96 (year ended 31.3.96). The bank is yet to finalise its accounts for the year ended 31.3.97.